

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OSLO

INFO AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (P A R A 5 M I S S I N G T W O L I N E S)

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR; IC; UK

SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: POLITICAL EFFECTS IN ICELAND

REF: (A) USNATO 2527; (B) REYKJAVIK 573; (C) OSLO 1918;

(D) USNATO 2530

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1. DEPARTMENT WELCOMES SUGGESTION USNATO (REF A) REGARDING NEED TO SEEK EARLY RESOLUTION OF UK- ICELANDIC FISHERIES DISPUTE. FURTHER, DEPARTMENT AGREES WITH YOUR ANALYSIS AND THAT OF AMBASSADOR IRVING (REF B) THAT INACTION BY ALLIES IN CURRENT FISHERIES DISPUTE COULD HAVE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON RETENTION US- MANNED ICELANDIC DEFENSE FORCE (IDF).

2. HOWEVER, BEFORE SEEKING ACTIVE NATO ROLE, WE BELIEVE SUPPORT SHOULD FIRST BE GIVEN TO TWO OTHER INITIATIVES CURRENTLY UNDERWAY. NORWEGIANS HAVE MADE DEMARCHES IN LONDON AND REYKJAVIK EXPRESSING THEIR CONCERN RE PRESENT SITUATION, AND NORWEGIAN OFFICIAL HAS ADVISED US THAT NORWAY HOPES TO CONTRIBUTE TO SOLUTION, AND IS PREPARED TO OFFER ITS GOOD OFFICES, (REF C). FURTHERMORE, NORWEGIAN OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON HAVE EMPHASIZED TO US IN LAST FEW DAYS NORWEGIAN FEARS THAT DISPUTE COULD SPILL OVER AND ADVERSELY AFFECT IDF' S RETENTION, WHICH NORWEGIANS CONSIDER VITAL TO SECURITY OF NORTH ATLANTIC.

3. IN ADDITION, BRITISH EMBASSY HERE HAS INFORMED US THAT

ON MAY 21, FOREIGN SECRETARY PROPOSED TO DEPARTING ICELANDIC AMBASSADOR THAT UK WITHDRAW ITS FRIGATES FROM 50 MILE ZONE IN RETURN FOR ICELANDIC PULLBACK OF THEIR GUN BOATS FROM DISPUTED AREA. PULLBACK WOULD BE FOR ONE-MONTH PERIOD DURING WHICH NEGOTIATIONS COULD TAKE PLACE. FYI THIS SPECIFIC BRITISH PROPOSAL HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC OR MADE KNOWN TO NAC, TO BEST OUR KNOWLEDGE. YOU SHOULD THEREFORE NOT ALLUDE TO IT SPECIFICALLY, AND REFER ONLY TO UK EXPRESSION OF DESIRE RESUME NEGOTIATIONS IN PEACEFUL CIRCUMSTANCES. END FYI.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT FIRST PRIORITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO DEFUSING CURRENT CRISIS BETWEEN ICELAND AND UK, WHICH APPEARS TO BE RAPIDLY ESCALATING. NORWEGIAN INITIATIVE AND BRITISH PROPOSAL SEEM US CONSTRUCTIVE STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION. THEREFORE, FOR PRESENT WE BELIEVE BEST US STANCE IS TO MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE AND GIVE STRONG SUPPORT TO ONGOING EFFORTS TO SOLVE DISPUTE.

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5. IN COUNCIL MEETING MAY 25 WE BELIEVE YOU SHOULD LIMIT YOURSELF TO SUPPORTING THESE INITIATIVES AND TO STRESSING IMPORTANCE TO ALLIANCE OF AVOIDING EXACERBATION OF DISPUTE, AND TO CALLING ON BOTH SIDES TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN CURRENT CRISIS, WHILE AT SAME TIME MAINTAINING CLOSE BEHIND- THE- SCENES CONTACT WITH BRITISH AND SCANDINAVIAN REPRESENTATIVES. IN VIEW OF VIEWS EXPRESSED BY

TOMASSON AT MAY 22 LUNCHEON (REF D), IT APPARENT THAT
ICELAND WOULD NOT WELCOME ROLE FOR SYG LUNS IN CURRENT
DISPUTE.

FOR OSLO: INFORM GON AT EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY OF US
SUPPORT FOR ITS OFFER OF GOOD OFFICES AND OF OUR HOPE
THAT NORWEGIANS WILL MOVE QUICKLY TO AVOID FURTHER
AGGRAVATION OF CRISIS. RUSH

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